

Annual Report of the Board of Management to the Parents of St. Joseph's

Secondary School, Newfoundwell, Drogheda for the School Year 2012 – 2013

The purpose of this Annual Report of the Board of Management of St. Joseph's Secondary School is to provide a summary of information on the operation of the school in line with the requirements of the 1998 Education Act.

This Report serves as an addition to the information provided on the school's website www.droghedacbs.ie, the various Newsletters issued by the school, letters to Parents, the School Prospectus and information provided to Parents at parent teacher meetings and on the Open Night. The following summaries are now provided to Parents, members of the school community and members of the wider community.

Overview of 2012-2013 School Year

St. Joseph's Secondary School is a voluntary secondary school under the trusteeship of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust. Its enrolment of students continues to increase adding pressure to its present resources and in particular its human resources and buildings. Teaching and learning continues to be the main focus of the school and the results achieved in State examinations continue to be excellent. 90% of its Leaving Certificate cohort of 2013 proceeded to Third Level courses.

The school is staffed by a committed and dedicated staff of teachers, SNA's and ancillary staff and supported by the Trustees, Board of Management, Parents' Council, Students' Council, Student Prefects and the local community. In common with many schools of its type, St. Joseph's found the past year to be one of the most challenging to date as a result of Budget 2012 education cutbacks. In particular the abolition of many grants, the reduction in Capitation Grants (which is the main source of school income) and the complete loss of Guidance Counsellor hours. The delay in the announcement of the grant for computer hardware for DCG at Leaving Certificate by the DES is also presenting difficulties for both the teachers and students in this subject.

1. School Enrolments and Staffing

School enrolments continued to grow with numbers now reaching 645 students at the time of writing this Report (November 2013). There were 35.90 Whole time teacher equivalents (WTE's) permitted by the Department of Education and Science (D.E.S.) and there were 40 teachers on the staff, 1.75 Special Needs Assistants, a full-time and part time Secretary, a full-time and part time Caretaker, a part-time Payroll Secretary and 3 part-time Cleaners were also employed by the Board of Management. Trends in primary school enrolments in our catchment area indicate a school population of 900 pupils within 3-4 years.

2. Trusteeship, Management and Representation

St. Joseph's continues to work closely with its Trustees, ERST, who maintains close connections with the school. The Board of Management is in its second year and it is chaired by Mr. John Mc Eneaney. The Board meet monthly and it is constituted in line with the Articles of Management for Secondary Schools. The Board was supported by an active Parents Council which meet on the first Monday of every school month. It comprises of representatives of Parents of current students in the school and it is chaired by parent Mrs. Bernie Reilly. The Student Council is elected annually and it comprises of student representatives from each year in the school. All of these bodies played a highly supportive and active role in the school in the school year 2012 – 2013.

3. Financial Management and Accounting

The financial management of the school is conducted under the JMB/AMCSS Guidelines and is in strict compliance with D.E.S. requirements. The school accounts are externally audited annually for the Board of Management by the Trustees auditing firm. The accounts are in turn examined by the Finance sub-committee of the Board of Management, which reports to the Board. The accounts were presented to the School Trustees and to the Financial Services Unit of the Joint Managerial Body for Secondary Schools. The JMB reviews school accounts on behalf of the Department of Education and Skills.

The accounts of the school are computerised and are operated on the TAS Books system. In the school year 2012 – 2013 the school had a small deficit in its accounts. School finances continue to be monitored and further prudent financial management is required in the future, particularly in view of the education cutbacks and the increase in ESB and gas bills. Reduced charges for the utility bills are being sought through the National Procurement

Agency. The Board of Management has been proactive in addressing school expenditure and it has a detailed budget in place for 2013-14. All education partners in the school have been consulted in this matter.

4. Inspections

The Department's DCG Inspector, Mr. David Anderson, inspected the teaching and learning in Technical Graphics and Design and Communication Graphics, DCG on the 16th of March, 2012. The inspection is being mentioned in this annual report as the Report was published in October 2012 on the DES website. The Inspector affirmed the excellent work of the teachers in these subjects and made four recommendations which have been addressed by the school.

5. Academic achievements

The Board of Management recognises and applauds the outstanding academic achievements of students in the Junior and Leaving Certificate. The teaching and support staff are highly commended. The Board notes also the performance of students with special education needs and it commends highly these students and their teachers. The support of the DES, NEPS and the State Examination Commission in achieving these results is acknowledged and appreciated.

6. Extra-Curricular Activities

Participation in extra-curricular activities in St. Joseph's reached a very high level in 2012-2013. The Board of Management acknowledges the participation of students, teachers, staff and parents in these activities. There were notable victories in GAA and in Athletics. The u16 Gaelic football team won the county final. The school now has a water polo team competing in the inter school's competition and reached two finals.

Note is also made of fundraising by students for charitable purposes which focused on funding for local charities in Drogheda.

7. School Development Planning

The school continues to engage actively in the process of School Development Planning. All of the partners in the school are consulted in regard to school planning and policy and there was engagement by all in 2012 – 2013. Subject departments are further developing and are supported financially by the Board of Management. The main priority was the review of the Anti-Bullying Policy with assistance of the TCD Anti Bullying unit. The Board gave

serious consideration to the growing numbers in the school and the projected shortage of accommodation. An extension to the school has been granted by the DES and construction work will commence in January 2014.

7. Matters of Concern for the Board of Management

Given the increased enrolment in the school and the projected rise in the student population, the Board is pleased with the fast track approach of the National Development Finance Agency, NDFA, to ensure the prompt delivery of the new extension. Of concern will be the availability of new accommodation in September 2014 due to the loss of four classrooms due to refurbishment of the existing building.

An application for an all-weather pitch was submitted to the Trustees and approval has been obtained. This new facility will provide additional space for PE classes.

8. Conclusion

The Board of Management wishes to express its appreciation to the hard working dedicated and committed staff of St. Joseph's led by the management team of Principal Mr. David Madden, Deputy Principal Mr. John Mansfield and supported by the middle management team of year heads, guidance counsellors, school chaplain and SEN, TY, LCA coordinators. It also commends the involvement and work of the Parents Council who have run back to back Fashion Shows over the past two years. Their fundraising activities have made it possible to offer breakfast to students for free each school morning. The Parents Council funding has also made it possible for supervised study to be offered during Christmas, Easter and mid-term breaks at an affordable charge. This initiative has proved popular with exam students with attendance averaging 90 students per day during the Easter break.

The Student Council and fifth year prefects are actively supporting the school in many ways. The students of the school are deserving of special mention for their excellent behaviour, co-operation, their academic and extra-curricular achievements. The Board is happy that the religious ethos and characteristic spirit of the school is being promoted

The school is under the trusteeship of ERST. The Board of Management wishes to acknowledge the commitment of the Trustee to the school. The Board thanks the Trustees for his continued support and interest in the school. The Board for its part strives to uphold the Catholic ethos of St. Joseph's and to fulfil the Mission Statement of the school.

Mission Statement

‘Our school recognises that each pupil who enrolls in our school is unique and has different gifts as well as different needs. It is our wish that our pupils will leave us with enhanced self-confidence and with life skills and attitudes which will enable them to lead lives satisfying to themselves and which may contribute to the betterment of society. We recognise that a pupil's development is closely linked to a good self-image and so we strive to present the school's total curriculum in such a manner as to allow all to realise their full potential. We see ourselves as working in partnership with parents to develop the gifts and to meet the needs of all. We regard our school as an educational establishment with a Christian community characterised by care and justice’

Signed by the Chairman on behalf of the Board of Management:

_____ Date: _____
Chairman of the Board of Management